REMARKS

As required, claims 3, 4 and 5 have been amended to include the missing periods. The specification and claims 2-4 have been amended to correct inadvertent errors. Entry of the amendments is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Claim 1 has been amended as suggested by the Examiner to overcome this rejection, withdrawal of which is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 6-10 and 13-15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over JP 6-166303 ("JP 303") in view of EP 602989 ("EP 989"). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection because the cited references, even if combined, still would not disclose or suggest each of the blocks (on the tread surface of the pneumatic tire) having a tire rotational direction side edge portion which is chamfered, so that the tire rotational direction side groove wall surface is continuously connected to a ground contact surface. The references also would not disclose or suggest a tire reverse rotational direction side edge portion having greater rigidity than the tire rotational direction side edge portion, as in the present invention.

The configuration of the claimed blocks allows for an even distribution of ground contact pressure on the blocks on the tread surface when running on a circuit course (as opposed to normal street driving), where there is a greater lateral acceleration during the turns. The chamfered portion of the tire rotational direction side edge portion allows for an even distribution of ground contact pressure on the blocks during normal driving conditions.

JP 303 is directed to a pneumatic tire having blocks 4 defined by main grooves 2 extending in the circumferential direction and a plurality of sub-grooves 3 extending generally transverse to the main grooves. The sub-grooves include an angle β between the wall surface of a sub-groove in the kicking-out side of the block 4 and the normal line, and an angle α between the wall surface of the sub-groove in the step-in side of the block and the normal line. JP 303 teaches that angle α is smaller than angle β.

The EP 989 reference discloses a pneumatic tire having axial grooves 4 with a curved portion on opposite sidewalls for reducing running noise.

The Examiner recognizes that the JP 303 reference fails to disclose the claimed blocks having a tire rotational direction side edge portion which is chamfered. He contends, however, that the curved portion on both opposing sidewalls of the axial grooves of EP 989 would provide the missing feature when combined with JP 303.

If the tire of JP 303 were modified to incorporate the curved portion as taught in the EP 989 reference, the result would be the blocks of JP 303 having sub-grooves that have rounded corners on both opposing wall faces. In other words, both the tire rotational direction side edge portion and the tire reverse rotational direction side edge portion would be curved or chamfered. The sub-grooves, however, would not include a tire rotational direction side edge portion which is chamfered, so that the tire rotational direction side groove wall surface is continuously connected to a ground contact surface, and an opposite tire reverse rotational direction side edge portion which has a greater rigidity than the tire rotational side edge portion, as in the present invention. In the present invention, the tire

reverse rotational direction side edge portion is not chamfered, as would be in the combination of JP 303 and EP 989. Claim 1 and its dependent claims 2-16 are believed to be allowable for this reason.

Claims 2-5 and 16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over JP 6-166303 in view of EP 602989 and JP 6-270609 or JP 64-36505. Claims 2-5 and 16 depend from claim 1, and therefore, are allowable for the same reasons given with respect to claim 1.

Claims 1 and 6-12 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over JP 62-026104 ("JP 104") in view of JP 303 and EP 989. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection also for the reasons given with respect to the rejection of claim 1 based on JP 303 and EP 989.

As properly recognized by the Examiner, the JP 104 reference does not disclose the inclination angles α and β of the tire rotational direction side groove wall surface and the tire reverse rotation direction side groove wall surface, nor the tire rotation direction side edge portion which is chamfered. The Examiner asserts, however, that these missing features are provided by JP 303 and EP 989.

As discussed above, the JP 303 and the EP 989 references, alone or in combination, do not disclose the tire reverse rotational direction side edge portion having greater rigidity than the tire rotational direction side edge portion, which is chamfered. The JP 104 reference also does not disclose this feature. Thus, even if JP 104 were combined with JP 303 and EP 989, the resulting tire still would not include the blocks having the tire

rotational direction side edge portion which is chamfered and the tire reverse rotational direction side edge portion which has greater rigidity than the tire rotational direction side edge portion, as in the present invention. For this reason, claim 1 and claims 6-12 are allowable JP 104 in view of JP 303 and EP 989.

For all of the above reasons, Applicants request reconsideration and allowance of the claimed invention. The Examiner should contact Applicants' undersigned attorney if a telephone conference would expedite prosecution.

Respectfully submitted,

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